LINCOLN AND HIS CABINET.

A LECTURE AT NEW HAVEN,

Delivered on Tuesday, March 10, by C. A. Dana of New York.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: I have been invited to tell you some recollections of impressions that were made upon me during the period when I was serving at Washington under President Lincoln and Edwin M. Stanton. I felt no special anxiety to perform this duty, but it seemed to me as though I ought not to decline it. The number of those who knew those men face to face, and saw them intimately during the time that tried men's souls, is already small and growing smaller; and it is a duty to record the impressions and to narrate the facts of those times and of those relations.

The election of Abraham Lincoln was brought about by a dissension in the Democratic party. It was divided and the Republican party was united, and the consequence was his election. The great question at issue in that election, although I do not think it was formally stated in the platforms of the parties, was this: Shall the owners of slaves enjoy the right of taking their slaves into the Territories of the United States that are now free, and keeping them there? The slave owners claimed that right. Slaves were property. They were like other property, and why should their owners be denied the right of taking their property into the Territories, when a Northern man could take his property, his horses, his oxen, whatever he possessed? The slaves were their oxen; they were their chattels, and they insisted that they ought to have the right of taking them into the Territories and keeping them there as slaves. That was the fundamental question of the election. And when Mr. Lincoln was elected, the South said: "Now we are denied this right, we will break up the Government; we will secede; we will withdraw." That right, too, they claimed as a constitutional principle. No Northerner had claimed it, though some ardent partisans had threatened it; but several of the Southern States now set it up as an original, inalienable right. They claimed that the refusal to them of the right to take their property with them when they went to live in one of the new Territories, was sufficient occasion for the withdrawal from the Union of the slave-holding States, and for the breaking up of the Government.

That question was to be determined by war; and as soon as Abraham Lincoln was elected they began to prepare for war. And when he became President we began on our side to prepare for war. Previous to his inauguration there had been no preparation. When Mr. Lincoln was inaugurated as President his first act was to name his Cabinet; and it was a common remark at the time that he had put into the Cabinet every man who had competed with him for the nomination in the Republican National Convention. The first in importance, in consequence, was William H. Seward of New York. He had been the most prominent competitor with Mr. Lincoln. It had been feared by many of those who were opposed to Mr. Seward's friends—he had no personal opposition, but some of his friends had a good deal—it was feared by those who were opposed to his friends that if he became President his friends would run the Government, and run it for purposes that all might not approve. He was made Secretary of State.

It is worth while to notice this: the great opposition against Mr. Seward was because he was a New Yorker, and the Republican party in New York was under the control, more or less decided, of what is called a boss. And they said there shouldn't be any boss, but that the party should direct itself. Well, exactly what that means, I have not been able to understand. An army without a General is of no use, and a ship without a Captain doesn't get navigated safely. I notice, too, that the class of politicians who are most strenuous against bosses are those who are not able to control for themselves the boss who happens to be in power in their district or their State. [Applause.] At any rate, that objection, managed by skilful politicians, and aided by Mr. Lincoln's personal popularity in the West, availed sufficiently to deprive Mr. Seward of the nomination.

The second man in importance to be put into the Cabinet was Mr. Chase of Ohio. He was a very able, noble, and spotless statesman; a man who would have been worthy of the best days of the old Roman republic. He had been a candidate, though less conspicuous than Seward; and he was also a candidate against whom the opposition that had been raised against Mr. Seward would not have availed, because while Mr. Seward had a friend who was the boss of the Republican party in New York, Mr. Chase bossed it himself in Ohio.

Then there was Mr. Cameron of Pennsylvania. He was made Secretary of War. A very able man; a practical politician of immense knowledge and resource; in earlier days a friend of Gen. Jackson; one of the first and most decided statesmen to embrace the Republican cause and to advocate the Republican doctrine. He held the office of Secretary of War only a little over a year, I think, and there was an outcry against him because, they said, he was buying too many guns, too many arms; he was spending too much money. And those who were against bosses were against this expenditure, because, they said, they didn't think it could be quite correct. But all these things were investigated afterward and nothing was ever proved against Simon Cameron except this, that he was a man with a manly heart in his bosom, that he appreciated the magnitude of the contest that was upon us, and prepared for it accordingly. His preparations were equal to the danger at hand; and, instead of being decried, he ought to have had, and did finally obtain, the full credit that was entitled to him as a wise, patriotic, and provident statesman. [Applause.]

Next, Mr. Bates of Missouri was made Attorney-General. He also had been run a good deal as a candidate for the Presidential nomination against Mr. Seward, but there had never been any great probability that he would get it. He was a most eloquent speaker and a very fair lawyer, and he served out his time in the Cabinet until the end of the Administration. He was an amiable and a gifted man, entirely creditable and satisfactory, without possessing any extraordinary genius or any unusual force of character. Then, there was Mr. C. B. Smith of Indiana, who was Secretary of the Interior, and Montgomery Blair of Maryland, a Democrat of the old school, was Postmaster-General; all eminent, able, useful men.

I must not forget, especially here in New Haven, in this rapid review of the assistants of Mr. Lincoln, the members of the Cabinet, to speak of the Connecticut member, Gideon Welles. He was Secretary of the Navy; and I am happy at this distance to testify to the truth that he was an excellent Secretary. He was a man of no decorations. There was no noise in the street when he went along; but he understood his duty, and he did it efficiently, continually, and unvaryingly. Other men were more conspicuous because they were brought more immediately in contact with the people. The navy is off at sea, and we don't see all the time what it is doing. I am able to testify that Mr. Welles was a perfectly faithful, able, devoted, and successful public officer. The navy under his control was far more efficient—it is true it was larger—and it was more energetic than it had ever been before in our day. He was a satisfactory and substantial member of the Government, and was always creditable to the State that sent him forth.

When Mr. Cameron went out of the Cabinet, Mr. Lincoln following the advice both of Cameron and of Charles Sumner, selected as his successor in the War Department Mr. Edwin M. Stanton. Stanton was an old State's rights Democrat. He had never voted anything but the Democratic ticket up to that time. He was a very extraordinary man, and it was through him that I came to be put into the War Department, and had the opportunities of acquiring the various information that I hope to lay before you this evening.

Mr. Stanton was a short, thick, dark man, with a very large head and a mass of black hair. He was very intense, and one of the most eloquent men that I ever met. He was entirely absorbed in his duties. His energy was something almost superhuman, and when he took hold of the War Department the armies seemed to grow, and they certainly gained in force and vim and thoroughness. The time of preparation which to us had before seemed so long and tedious that we were almost losing hope, that time came to an end, and the time of action began. I said that Mr. Stanton was a very eloquent man. In order to illustrate that, if you will allow me, I will tell a little story. In the last year of the war, the Army of the Potomac had hanging around it a man, a sort of peddler—I think his name may have been Morse, but I don't remember positively; it was something like that. He went back and forward into Virginia. He would go down into the rebel lines and then he would come back. When he went down, he went in the character of a man who had entirely hoodwinked the Washington authorities and deluded them; and, in spite of them, or by some corruption or other, he always brought with him into the Confederate lines something that the people wanted down there, some dresses for the ladies, or some little luxury that they couldn't get otherwise.

These things that he took with him were always supervised by Government agents before he went away. Then he would come back again and bring us a lot of valuable information. As you see, he was a kind of spy for both sides. So he found a good thing in it, and we found a good thing in it, because in that way we got a great deal of information about the strength of armies, about the preparation, about the movements of the enemy, and so on; and it was thought to be sufficiently useful to allow this thing to go on. Well, at last he came back and went to Baltimore and got his outfit to take down South, and when he came up, the chief detective of the War Department examined his goods carefully, and found that he had got lots of things that we could not allow him to take. We had all his bills telling where he had bought these things in Baltimore. They amounted to perhaps $20,000 or $25,000, or more. A good deal of his stuff was military goods and uniforms, and this, we said, is altogether too contraband. So we confiscated the contraband goods and put Morse in prison; and one afternoon Col. Taylor, a very valuable military officer and a nephew of President Taylor, went over to Baltimore and arrested the principal merchants of that town who had sold these goods to Morse, the chief dry goods dealers and fancy merchants, so that no lady could go out and buy even a pair of gloves the next day, for the shops were all shut. Presently a deputation from Baltimore came over to see President Lincoln to say that this was a great outrage, and that these gentlemen, most respectable merchants, faultless citizens, ought all to be set instantly at liberty and damages paid them. Mr. Lincoln sent the deputation over to the War Department, and Mr. Stanton sent for me. He said: "All Baltimore is coming here. Sit down here and hear the discussion we shall have." So they came in, the bank Presidents and boss merchants of Baltimore. There must have been at least fifty millions of dollars in the deputation.

The gentlemen sat down around the fire in the Secretary's office, and began to make their speeches detailing the circumstances and the wickedness of this outrage. There was no ground for it, no justification. After half a dozen of them had spoken, Mr. Stanton asked one after another if he had anything more to say, and they all said No. Then Stanton began and delivered the most eloquent speech that I ever listened to. He described the beginning of the war, for which he said there was no justification. Being beaten in an election was no reason for destroying the Government. Then he went on to the fact that half a million of our young men had been laid in untimely graves by this conspiracy of the slave interest. He described the whole conspiracy in the most solemn and impressive terms, and then he depicted the offence that this man Morse, aided by these several merchants, had committed. He said: "Gentlemen, if you would like to examine the bills of what he was taking to the enemy, here they are." And when he finished, these gentlemen, without answering a word, got up, and one by one went away. That was the only speech I ever listened to that cleared out the entire audience. [Laughter and applause.]

Well, that's the sort of man Stanton was. He was impulsive, warm-blooded, very quick in execution, perhaps not always infallible in judgment. I never knew a man who could do so much work in a given time. He was a nervous man; a man of imagination; a man utterly absorbed in the idea of the republic one and indivisible; and he lived for it, wore himself out in the service, and shortly after he ceased to serve in that office, he passed into another world entirely exhausted, consumed by his devotion to public duties. That was the kind of men that Mr. Lincoln had around him. Not all like Stanton; not all like Cameron; not all like Chase; but all faithful to their duty, all Americans, all patriots.

Mr. Seward, for instance, possessed a great, subtle, far-reaching intelligence. He was an optimist. He had imagination. He was reaching out always toward the future and dwelling upon it. The treaty by which we acquired Alaska was his doing. He also negotiated and arranged the treaty, that Congress would not approve, for the acquisition of St. Thomas, in the West Indies. He believed that North America should be one and united; one Government, one flag, one power. He understood that the islands of the Antilles, like the frozen regions of the Arctic Ocean, should all live and grow great with that beautiful emblem, the Stars and Stripes, floating over them. [Applause.]

Probably in the Administration Mr. Seward had the most cultivated and comprehensive intellect. He wasn't equal to Mr. Lincoln, because, as I have said, he was altogether an optimist. He didn't believe any permanent injury could happen to anybody as long as the Stars and Stripes were there. During the war, it was always said that he expected to bring back the seceding States by a friendly act of Congress, or some device of negotiation. That was probably a fault in his judgment; yet, take him for all in all, it would be difficult to match him among living statesmen, or among the statesmen of the world. He was an American in earnest. He believed in that democracy which is democracy indeed. He believed in the Constitution of the United States, and his one desire was that its blessings should be extended and made perpetual over all this continent. I look back upon him with intense gratitude. He set up the landmarks toward which we are to come, the boundaries which we are to attain to. He proclaimed the principle of continental unity, and that unity he would found in freedom, in progress, and in improvement of every nature.

Such were the principal men by whom Mr. Lincoln was surrounded. They were very independent men. They were not always satisfied with his decisions, with his action; but he was always master of the house. There was no pretension about Abraham Lincoln. He didn't put on any airs, and I never heard him say a harsh word to anybody. I never heard him speak a word of complaint even. These other gentlemen, the members of the Cabinet, like human beings in general, were not pleased with everything. Much was imperfect; much was not ordered in the best way; much, perhaps, might have been done better if they individually had had charge of it. Not so with the President. He was most calm, equable, uncomplaining, and, to my mind, one of the happiest men that I have ever known. He always had a pleasant word for everybody. What he said showed the profoundest thought, even when he was joking. He seemed to see every side of every question. He never was impatient; he never was in a hurry; and he never tried to hurry anybody else. To every one he was pleasant and cordial; yet they all felt that it was his word that went at last; and until he had decided, the case hadn't been decided and the final orders not issued yet.

But before going further, let me endeavor to give those in this audience who never saw Mr. Lincoln, some idea of his personal appearance. He was a very tall man—6 feet 4 inches. His complexion was dark, his eyes and hair black; and though he was of lean, spare habit, I should suppose he must have weighed about 180 pounds. He was a man of fine fibre, and thus a brain of superior power was contained in a small, but rather elongated skull. Horatio Seymour once spoke of him as a man "who wore a No. 7 hat and a No. 14 boot." His movements were rather angular, but never awkward; and he was never burdened with that frequent curse of unfortunate genius, the dreadful oppression of petty self-consciousness.

It was a most remarkable character, that of Abraham Lincoln. He had the most comprehensive, the most judicious mind; he was the least faulty in his conclusions of any man that I have ever known. He never stepped too soon, and he never stepped too late. Just consider, if you can, the problem that was before him when he became President. One-third of the country in open rebellion. Not merely in rebellion on account of this peculiar property in slaves that we have spoken of, but also because they had an intellectual conviction that they had a right under the Constitution to leave the Union, when they thought it was advantageous to do so.

They had come into the Union, they had accepted the Constitution, and they couldn't admit that that was an irrevocable transaction. The right of rebellion had been talked of in every quarter. Every man has a right to rebel, we were told, if only he is willing to take the consequences. That was the doctrine of our seceding countrymen in the South. They were defending their property as we would defend ours, and they were defending what they considered to be an inherent right, the right of every freeman to say whether he will submit to the Government that is over him, or rebel and take the consequences. And I am bound to declare that the most of them were just as sincere in their purpose and their passion as we were in ours.

Mr. Lincoln was not what you would call an educated man. The college that he had attended was that which a man attends who gets up at daylight to hoe the corn, and sits up at night to read the best book he can find by the side of a burning pine knot. What education he had he picked up in that way. He had read a great many books; and all the books that he had read, he knew. He had a tenacious memory, just as he had the ability to see the essential thing. He never took an unimportant point and went off upon that; but he always laid hold of the real thing, of the real question, and attended to that without attending to the others any more than was indispensably necessary.

Thus, while we say that Mr. Lincoln was an uneducated man, uneducated in the sense that we recognize here in New Haven, or at any other great college town, he yet had a singularly perfect education in regard to everything that concerns the practical affairs of life. His judgment was excellent, and his information was always accurate. He knew what the thing was. He was a man of genius, and, contrasted with men of education, genius will always carry the day. I remember very well going into Mr. Stanton's room in the War Department on the day of the Gettysburg celebration, and he said: "Have you seen these Gettysburg speeches?"

"No," said I; "I didn't know you had them."

He said: "Yes; and the people will be delighted with them. Edward Everett has made a speech that will make three columns in the newspapers, and Mr. Lincoln has made a speech of perhaps forty or fifty lines. Everett's is the speech of a scholar, polished to the last possibility. It is elegant and it is learned; but Lincoln's speech will be read by a thousand men where one reads Everett's, and will be remembered as long as anybody's speeches are remembered who speaks in the English language."

That was the truth. If you will take those two speeches now, you will get an idea how superior genius is to education; how superior that intellectual faculty is which sees the vitality of a question and knows how to state it; how superior that intellectual faculty is which regards everything with the fire of earnestness in the soul, with the relentless purpose of a heart devoted to objects beyond literature. [Applause.]

Another remarkable peculiarity of Mr. Lincoln's was that he seemed to have no illusions. He had no freakish notions that things were so or might be so, when they were not so. All his thinking and all his reasoning, all his mind, in short, was based continually upon actual facts and upon facts of which, as I said, he saw the essence. I never heard him say anything that was not so. I never heard him foretell things. He told what they were. But I never heard him intimate that such and such consequences were likely to happen, without the consequences following. I should say, perhaps, that his greatest quality was wisdom. And that is something superior to talent, superior to education. I do not think it can be acquired. He had it. He was wise; he was not mistaken; he saw things as they were. All the advice that he gave was wise; it was judicious; and it was always timely. This wisdom, it is scarcely necessary to add, had its animating philosophy in his own famous words: "With charity toward all; with malice toward none." Or to afford a more extended illustration, let me quote from Nicolay and Hay's History (Volume VI., p. 152,) the main part of his most admirable letter of August 22, 1862, to Horace Greeley:

"If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views. I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free."

Another remarkable quality was his personal kindness. He was kind at heart, not from mere politeness. As I said, I never heard him say an unkind thing about anybody. Now and then he would laugh at something jocose or satirical that somebody had done or said, but it was always pleasant humor. I noticed his sweetness of nature particularly with his little son, a child at that time perhaps six or eight years old, who used to roam the departments, and whom everybody called Tad. He had a defective palate and couldn't speak very plainly. Often I have sat by his father reporting to him about some important matter that I had been ordered to inquire into, and he would have this boy on his knee; and, while he would perfectly understand the report, the striking thing about him was his affection for the child. He was good to everybody. Once there was a great gathering at the White House on New Year's Day, and all the diplomats came in their uniforms, and all the officers of the army and navy in Washington were in full costume. A little girl of mine said: "Papa, couldn't you take me over to see that?" I said yes; so I took her over, and put her in a corner where she beheld this gorgeous show. When it was finished, I went up to Mr. Lincoln and said: "I have a little girl here who wants to shake hands with you." He went over to her and took her up and kissed her and talked to her. She will never forget it if she lives to be a thousand years old. That was the nature of the man. I must tell another story to illustrate the same point.

Whenever an important campaign of the armies began, Mr. Lincoln liked to send me, because when I went, with my newspaper experience, he got a clear report of everything that happened. The Generals didn't like to sit down, after fighting all day, and write a report, and they were always glad to have me come to them. Well, when Gen. Grant went out for the campaign in the Wilderness—that was the last great campaign which ended in the surrender of Richmond—for two days we had no reports. One evening I got a message to come to the War Department. There I found the President and Mr. Stanton. Lincoln said: "We are troubled about this business down in the Wilderness. We don't know what is going on. I would like you to go down." I said: "Certainly."

"How soon can you be ready?" said he. I said: "It will take twenty minutes to go home and change my clothes and get the things that I want to take, and get my horse saddled, and then it will take twenty minutes to get a train. Besides, we must have an escort."

"Well," said he, "you are willing to go?"

"Why, yes," I said; "I am delighted. I want to see it." So I went and ordered a train, got my things all ready, and got an escort provided to defend the train after we had got out beyond our lines, and then went down and got into a car. Somehow we didn't start, and presently there came a man on horseback, who said to me: "The President wants you at the War Department." So I rode back to the War Department, and there was Mr. Lincoln with Mr. Stanton. The President said:

"I have been thinking about this, Dana, and I don't like to send you. There is Jeb Stuart with his cavalry roaming over the region that you will have to cross, and I am afraid to have you go." Said I: "Mr. Lincoln, is that the reason you called me back here?" "Yes," he said. "I don't like to have you go." I said: "I don't think that is a very good reason, because I have a good horse and forty troopers, and we are able to run if they are too many for us, and if they are not, we can fight." "Well," said he, "I am glad to hear you say that, because I really want you to go, but I couldn't send you out until I felt sure that you were entirely willing yourself." "Well," I answered, "you are the first General that ever gave orders in that way, I guess." That was the man kindly and affectionate to everybody. I don't even believe he ever spoke a cross word to his wife. [Laughter.] That is saying a good deal, isn't it, gentlemen?

These are amiable and lovable personal qualities, but the great thing was the fact *that he succeeded*: that the civil war was ended under his rule. He succeeded, with the forces of the anti-slavery States, in putting down a rebellion in which twelve millions of people were concerned, determined people, educated people, fighting for their ideas and their property, fighting to the last, fighting to the death. I don't think there is anything else in history to compare with that achievement. How did he do it?

In the first place, he never was in haste. As I said, he never took a step too soon, and also he never took a step too late. When the whole Northern country seemed to be clamoring for him to issue a proclamation abolishing slavery, he didn't do it. Deputation after deputation went to Washington. I remember once a hundred gentlemen came, dressed in black coats, mostly clergymen, from Massachusetts. They appealed to him to proclaim the abolition of slavery. But he didn't do it. He allowed Mr. Cameron and Gen. Butler to execute their great idea of treating slaves as contraband of war, and of protecting those who had got into our lines against being recaptured by their Southern owners. But he would not prematurely make the proclamation that was so much desired. Finally the time came; and of that he was the judge. Nobody else decided it; nobody commanded it; the proclamation was issued as he thought best; and it was efficacious. The people of the North, who during the long contest over slavery had always stood strenuously by the compromises of the Constitution, might themselves have become half rebels if this proclamation had been issued too soon. They at last were tired of waiting, tired of endeavoring to preserve even a show of regard for what was called the compromises of the Constitution when they believed the Constitution itself was in danger. Thus public opinion was ripe when the proclamation came, and that was the beginning of the end.

This unerring judgment, this patience which waited and which knew when the right time had arrived: those were intellectual qualities that I do not find exercised upon any such scale by any other man in history, and with such unerring precision. This proves Abraham Lincoln to have been intellectually one of the greatest of rulers. If we look through the record of great men, where has there ever been one to be matched alongside of him? I don't know. He could have issued this proclamation two years before, perhaps, and the consequence of it might have been our entire defeat; but when it came it did its work, and it did us no harm whatever. Nobody protested against it, not even the Confederates themselves. But they felt it deeply.

Another interesting fact about Abraham Lincoln was that he developed into a great military man, that is to say, a man of supreme military judgment. I do not risk anything in saying that if you will study the records of the war, and study the writings relating to it, you will agree with me that the greatest General we had, greater than Grant or Thomas, was Abraham Lincoln. It was not so at the beginning; but after three or four years of constant practice in the science and art of war, he arrived at this extraordinary knowledge of it, so that Von Moltke was not a better General or an abler planner or expounder of a campaign than President Lincoln was. He was, to sum it up, a born leader of men. He knew human nature; he knew what chord to strike, and he was never afraid to strike it when he believed that the time had arrived. On this, let me tell another story:

Lincoln was a supreme politician, and he was a politician who understood politics, because he understood human nature. And finally the idea was conceived that the Constitution of the United States should be amended so that slavery should be prohibited in the Constitution. That was a change in our polity, and it was also a most important military measure. It was intended not merely as a means of prohibiting slavery and decreeing its abolition, but as a means of affecting the judgment and the feeling, and the anticipations of those in rebellion. It was believed that that amendment to the Constitution would be equivalent to new armies in the field, equivalent to sending a hundred thousand men to fight, because this would be an intellectual army and an intellectual force that would tend to paralyze the enemy and break the continuity of his ideas. In order to amend the Constitution it was necessary first to have the proposed amendment approved by two-thirds of the States, and when that question came to be considered the issue was seen to be so close that one State more was necessary. Then the State of Nevada was organized to answer that purpose, and was admitted into the Union. I have heard people sometimes complain of Nevada as a superfluous and petty State, not big enough to be a State; but when I hear that complaint I always think of Abraham Lincoln's saying: "It is easier to admit Nevada than to raise another million of soldiers."

Well, when the question finally came around to be voted upon in the House of Representatives, it required three-quarters of the votes; and this vote, this final decision, was canvassed earnestly, intensely, most anxiously for a long time beforehand. At last, late one afternoon, the President came into my office, a room in the third story of the War Department. He used to come there sometimes rather than send for me, because he was very fond of walking, and liked to go about a good deal. He came in and shut the door.

"Dana," he said, "I am very anxious about this vote. It has got to be taken next week. The time is very short. It is going to be a great deal closer than I wish it was."

"There are plenty of Democrats who wish to vote for it," I replied, "and who will vote for it. There is Governor English of Connecticut; I think he is sure, isn't he?"

"Oh, yes, he is sure, on the merits of the question."

"Then," said I, "there's Sunset Cox of Ohio. How is he?"

"He is sure and fearless. But there are some others that I am not clear about. There are three that you can deal with better than anybody else, perhaps, as you know them all. I wish you would send for them."

He told me who they were; it isn't necessary to repeat the names here. One man was from New Jersey and two from New York.

"What will they be likely to want?" I asked.

"I don't know," said the President; "I don't know. It makes no difference, though, what they want. Here is the alternative, that we carry this vote or be compelled to raise another million and I don't know how many more men, and fight no one knows how long. It is a question of three votes or new armies."

"Well, sir," said I, "what shall I say to these gentlemen?"

"I don't know," said he; "but I say this to you, that whatever promise you make to those men, I will perform it."

Well, now, this is a fact that I do not think is recorded in any history. I don't believe my friend Thomas C. Acton, who sits back there, ever heard of it before. I sent for the men, and saw them one by one. I found that they were afraid of their party. They said that some fellows in the party would be down on them. Two of them wanted internal revenue collectors appointed. Said I: "You shall have it." Another one wanted a very important appointment about the Custom House of New York. I knew the man well whom he wanted to have appointed. He was a Republican, though the Congressman was a Democrat. I had served with him in the Republican party County Committee of New York. The office was worth perhaps $20,000 a year. When the Congressman stated the case, I asked him: "Do you want that?"

"Yes," said he.

"Well," I answered, "you shall have it."

"I understand, of course," said he, "that you are not saying this on your own authority?"

"Oh, no," said I; "I am saying it on the authority of the President."

Well, he voted; the amendment was carried, and slavery was abolished by constitutional prohibition in all of the United States. That was done, and I felt that this little piece of side politics was one of the most judicious, humane, and wise pieces of executive authority that I had ever assisted in or witnessed. [Applause.]

But this appointment in the New York Custom House was to wait a few weeks until the term of the actual incumbent had run out. My friend, the Democratic Congressman, was quite willing. He said: "That's all right; I am in no hurry." Well, before the time had expired, Mr. Lincoln was murdered, and Andrew Johnson became President. I had gone away, and was in the West, when one day I got a telegram from Roscoe Conkling: "Come to Washington." So I went. He said:

"I want you to go and see President Johnson and tell him that this is a sacred promise of Mr. Lincoln's, and that it must be kept."

Then I went to the White House and saw President Johnson.

"This is Mr. Lincoln's promise," I urged. "He regarded it as saving the necessity of another call for troops, and raising perhaps a million men to continue the war. I trust, Mr. President, that you will see your way clear to execute this promise."

"Well, Mr. Dana," he replied, "I don't say that I won't, but I have observed in the course of my experience, that such bargains tend to immorality." [Laughter.]

The appointment was not made. I am happy to say, however, that the gentleman to whom the promise was given never found any fault either with President Lincoln or with the Assistant Secretary, who had been the means of making the promise to him. [Applause.]

There is perceptible, I think, a very decided disposition to convert this great element in our history, the savior of the nation, the man who brought us through that terrible civil war with our liberties undiminished, to convert him into a kind of hero of romance, a legendary figure. He is sometimes thought to have been queer and eccentric, and there are a good many stories that seem to favor that idea. I never found anything eccentric in him. I found only wisdom and humor: humor that never failed and that always was fresh, delightful, and relieving to the awful seriousness of the duties that we were engaged in every day.

I remember one evening, just before the Presidential election of '64. The decision, it was plain, would turn on the vote of Pennsylvania; and the State election of Pennsylvania, which then took place in October, a month before the Presidential election, was pretty sure to show how the Presidential election would go in that State. So on the evening of the day when that election had been held, we were all gathered in the War Department, the President, Mr. Stanton, Chief Justice Chase, Mr. Welles, and the principal Generals that were then in Washington. Perhaps there were twenty gentlemen there. When I came in at about 10 o'clock, the President said to me: "Come here, Dana; sit down here." So I sat down beside him. The others were all sitting around as solemn as a camp meeting. [Laughter.]

Indeed, it was a pretty solemn occasion, because on the decision of this election hung the question whether we were there, or were not there. The President looked over to me and said: "Did you ever read anything of Petroleum V. Nasby?" I answered yes. "Well," he said, "I want to read you something." So he began to read just loud enough for me to hear. Mr. Stanton couldn't stand this. He got up and went off into the telegraph room that was just alongside. Presently he opened the door and called me: "I have got something for you." So I went into the telegraph office. I found that he hadn't any work for me. He simply wanted to objurgate the man who could sit down at such time and read such silly, stupid stuff as that. [Laughter.] But that constant humor which Mr. Lincoln infused into everything was really what saved him, and brought him through the whole of this immense suffering and struggle in good health and spirits at last.

I ought to say that this disposition that I have just referred to, to invent queer stories about Mr. Lincoln is getting corrected. The life of him which Mr. McClure is now publishing, and which Miss Ida Tarbell is writing, is based upon a thorough investigation of the facts in his history and his family's history, and the history of his childhood, and the experience of the family in Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois; an investigation that has not been made before. It proves in the first place that Mr. Lincoln did not come of a trifling, silly, or stupid family. He belonged to the Lincolns of Hingham, Mass., and he was related to the famous Governor Lincoln. Many stories about his marriage, too, are not so. Lincoln was a straight, upright, respectable man. He was a poor man, picking up knowledge as best he could, and rising by his own talent until he reached a great place in the bar of Illinois, and finally became President of the United States.

I regard the book which Mr. McClure is publishing as a public benefaction. With this book presenting all these minute details, and with the great work of Hay and Nicolay, Mr. Lincoln's private secretaries, giving the most important documents, we shall have amply satisfactory and faithful accounts of perhaps the greatest man in modern American history; perhaps the greatest man in the modern history of mankind. [Applause.]

Let me bring these reminiscences to a close with another story which relates to the last day of Mr. Lincoln's life. It was one of my duties in the War Department to receive the reports of the officers of the Secret Service in every part of the country. One cloudy afternoon I got a telegram from the Provost Marshal in Portland, Me., saying: "I have positive information that Jacob Thompson will pass through Portland to-night in order to take a steamer for England. What are your orders?" Jacob Thompson of Mississippi, as you know, had been Secretary of the Interior in President Buchanan's administration. He was a conspicuous secessionist, and for some time had been employed in Canada as a semi-diplomatic agent of the Confederate Government, getting up raids, of which the notorious attack on St. Albans, Vermont, was a specimen. I took the telegram and went down and read it to Mr. Stanton. His order was prompt: "Arrest him!" But as I was going out of the door, he called to me and said: "No, wait. Better go over and see the President."

At the White House all business was over, and I went into the President's business room without meeting any one. Opening the door, there seemed to be no one in the room, but as I was turning to go out, Mr. Lincoln called me from a little side room, where he was washing his hands:

"Halloo, Dana," said he. "What is it? What's up?"

Then I read him the telegram.

"What does Stanton say?" he asked.

"He says arrest him, but that I should refer the question to you."

"Well," said he slowly, wiping his hands: "No, I rather think not. When you have got an elephant by the hind leg, and he is trying to run away, it's best to let him run."

With this direction I returned to the War Department.

"Well, what says he?" asked Mr. Stanton.

"He says that when you have got an elephant by the hind leg and he is trying to run away, it's best to let him run."

"Oh, stuff!" said Stanton.

That night I was awaked from a sound sleep with the news that Mr. Lincoln had been shot, and that the Secretary wanted me at Manager Ford's house. I found the President lying unconscious, though breathing heavily, on a bed in a small side room, while all the members of the Cabinet and the Chief Justice with them, were gathered in the adjoining parlor. They seemed to be almost as much paralyzed as the unconscious sufferer within the little chamber. The surgeons said there was no hope. Mr Stanton alone was in full activity.

"Sit down here," said he; "I want you."

Then he began and dictated orders one after another, which I wrote out and sent swiftly to the telegraph. All those orders were required to keep the business of the Government in full motion till the crisis should be over. It was perhaps 2 o'clock in the morning before he said: "That's enough. Now you can go home."

The next morning just about daylight I was awaked by a rapping on a lower window. It was Col. Pelouze of the Adjutant-General's office, who said:

"Mr. Dana, the President is dead, and Mr. Stanton directs you to arrest Jacob Thompson."

The order was sent to Portland, but Thompson couldn't be found there. He had taken the Canadian road to Halifax.

And so Lincoln finished his marvellous career and passed to the other world, leaving other men to deal with the arduous and perilous questions of Reconstruction. He had, indeed, done enough, and it may be he was even fortunate in the tragedy of his death. Who knows?

But as we bid him farewell to-night, we can declare that while he was great in genius, in character, and in opportunities, he was even greater in sanity of heart and elevation of spirit. While he was entirely human, there was no mean fibre in his composition, no base, petty, selfish impulse in his soul.

THE NATIONAL GUARD REGISTER.

Changes in the Year Book of the Organized Militia of New York.

About a month later than usual the National Guard Register for 1896 makes its appearance. Every one who calls it anything calls it the National Guard Register, but since the Naval Reserve emerged from its attitude of reserve the official name for this annual is "Official Register of the Organized Land and Naval Forces of the State of New York." It purports to be published on Dec. 31, 1895.

In spite of its being a month late, the compiler hasn't had time to put the names of all entitled to be in the book, and three "kid Lieutenants" are inclined to say that they will take their dolls and go home because their names are omitted, while those of other officers, still fresher "kids," are included. It would be invidious to dwell on the personality of these officers, but THE SUN knows 'em by name.

Many changes are to be noted in the new Register. In the first place, the "General Staff" is changed considerably. The only important changes, however, are in the Adjutant-Generalcy and the Inspector-Generalcy. In the first, Gen. E. A. McAlpin succeeds Gen. T. H. McGrath; and in the second, Gen. F. C. McLewee succeeds Brev. Brig.-Gen. S. M. Welch. Gen. Whitlock remains General Inspector of Rifle Practice and Gen. B. Flagler succeeds Gen. Varian as Chief of Ordnance. There is a swarm of Brigadier-Generals and Colonels on the Governor's staff; but as their work is all done by the employees in the Adjutant-General's and the Ordnance departments, their names don't matter in the least.

On the First Brigade staff two changes have occurred. Major Perkins and Major Appleton have resigned, and Capt. Roosevelt and Capt. Harriman, formerly aides-de-camp, have been promoted; no aides have been appointed to succeed them. On the Second Brigade staff Capt. W. E. C. Mayer, the champion resigner of the National Guard, has been appointed Inspector, and one of the aides has been promoted Major. There are no changes in the staffs of the Third and Fourth Brigades.

No changes have taken place among the commanding Generals of the Guard. The Quartermaster-General, not having anything to do, has to have one assistant, a Colonel; and the Commissary-General, having still less, has two assistants, both Colonels. The Chief of Artillery (there are five batteries in the State) is a Brigadier-General, and has two Colonels as assistants; and the Paymaster-General has one Colonel, who is his chief clerk really, and another Colonel and a Major, who are Assistant Paymasters-General. There is no Chaplain-General.

For the first time the signal service of the State appears by itself, with a Chief Signal Officer at the head, and the four corps (no longer brigade signal corps) each by itself.

The brief histories of the various organizations in the Guard, which last year were printed in the Adjutant-General's report, this year precede the rosters of the regiments, batteries, and separate companies. The histories of the organizations of the First and Second Brigades are longer than they were last year, because they include a notice of the service of the regiments at the Brooklyn trolley strike.

Squadron A lends the series of rosters. It was formed out of Troop A on Feb. 9, 1895, and though it consists of only two troops, has a battalion organization. Troop C, in Brooklyn, had no officers when the Register went to press. Probably next year there will be a Troop D, and a Brigadier-General, chief of cavalry. It is to be hoped that this latter General will be able to ride, and that his assistants for what is a Brigadier on a Governor's staff without assistants?—will be, too.

There have been no changes among the artillery officers. In the Seventh, most conservative of regiments, there has been a series of changes. This began with the increase of staff officers and the election of Lieut.-Col. Smith to the Colonelcy of the Sixty-ninth Regiment. He was succeeded by Major Kipp, who was followed by Capt. Conover, who was succeeded by First Sergeant Janssen. Two battalion Adjutants and two new battalion Quartermasters were appointed; a new commissary and a new Assistant Surgeon filled vacancies caused by death and resignation respectively; two new Captains besides Capt. Janssen were commissioned, and five Lieutenants have appeared in all—fourteen changes, excluding the new Quartermasters.

The Eighth Battalion has become a regiment again, too recently, however, for the change to be noted in this year's register. In the Ninth Regiment, one officer is put down as having been a "Private, Eighth Regiment Foot, Victoria's Regular Forces, Sept. 9, 1880;" this is a rather too familiar way of saying that on that date he enlisted in what is now called the Liverpool Regiment of the British army. The Twelfth Regiment generally holds the record for changes; but there were only fourteen appointments of officers therein, and of these two were "original." In the Forty-seventh Regiment there were only seven appointments, and in the Sixty-fifth only six; and in both cases, two appointments were original.

Among the most interesting of the separate companies is the Sixth of Troy. It dates from 1835, when the Troy Citizens' Corps was organized, which, after serving in the war, was reorganized in 1877 into the Sixth Separate Company. It served in the "anti-rent war" of 1839; in 1844, in a riot; in 1850, in a riot; in the railroad riots of 1877, and at Buffalo.

Another old company is the Nineteenth of Poughkeepsie. It was organized on Nov. 28, 1828, and was assigned to the Eighty-fourth Regiment in 1832, and to the Twenty-first in 1848; it got its present name on Dec. 17, 1881. It served in various riots between 1847 and 1852, while the Hudson River Railroad was building; on riot duty in 1869; July, 1877, and at Buffalo in 1892.

Not a single officer has joined the retired list; and only seven officers have been made supernumerary during the year. The supernumerary list contains the names of Col. Bacon of the famous Second Provisional Regiment; of Col. Chauncey M. Depew, Judge Advocate, Fifth Division; of Col Lamont, Secretary of War now, and of dozens of staff officers rendered supernumerary by the consolidation of Aug. 5, 1898, when the four divisions were abolished and the eight brigades were made into four.

Few changes have taken place in the Naval Reserve. The most important change was the disbandment of the First Separate Naval Division of Rochester, on Feb. 9, 1895.

AUSTRALIA'S SCOURGE.

MORE NEWS OF THE RUIN CAUSED BY JANUARY'S STORM AND HEAT.

Horrors of the Water Famine in the Coolgardie Gold Fields—Hundreds Scorched to Death in the Desert as They Strove to Reach the Green Fields Beyond.

Australia has been the sport and the victim of the most extraordinary combination and succession of climatic conditions that perhaps ever have been recorded. Brief telegraphic reports have reached here of the heat, the storms, and the floods that have swept the continent and have strewn the coasts with wrecks, and last week THE SUN told something of the terrible effects of the heat, as described in mail advices received up to that time. News brought by later steamers shows that the intensity of the heat wave was much greater in the interior than on the coast, and that the suffering was correspondingly greater; and further, that the heat continued for some time after the steamers that brought the news printed last week had left Australia, and that after the heat came electric storms, wind storms, and floods that wrought almost as much havoc as did the heat.

The previous news was that Sydney's hottest day, the hottest in the history of the town up to that time was Jan. 13, when the temperature was 108.05° in the shade. Several days later the temperature touched 118° in the shade. The death rate assumed alarming proportions. There were eighty deaths from the heat in Sydney in one day, and 250 deaths in Sydney and its suburbs during that one week, at least 150 being attributed directly to the heat. The death rate during the whole period of heat was much greater than during the influenza epidemic of four years ago. Many of the victims were infants and aged persons, although persons in the prime of life also died from sunstroke and heat apoplexy in alarming numbers.

The heat appears to have been greatest in Western Australia. During the second and third week of January the temperature of 125° in the shade was registered in many parts of the colony, and in the alkali deserts it reached 130°. The whole face of the country shrivelled. Crops of all kinds were ruined, and herds died from heat and want of water.

Directly after the heat came a series of electrical storms and wind storms that swept the continent as widely as did the heat wave. These storms did most damage in Western Australia, and were of cyclonic violence in many places. The town of Murrurundi was almost wiped out. The cyclone struck the town during the night. The whole country was lit up for half an hour with balls of fire, vivid lightning flashes, and a constant stream of electric illumination that scintillated and moved in waves like the aurora, but of terrifying intensity. Almost every building in the town was levelled. From many parts of Western Australia a similar story has come, the details being received but slowly, however, because the telegraph lines were entirely destroyed. All over the colony houses were blown down, and many persons and animals were killed by lightning.

On the Queensland coast the storms were of almost equal violence, and the loss of shipping was appalling. The steamer Glanworth, with eighty-five passengers and a crew of twenty men aboard, went on the rocks at Gladstone at midnight on Jan. 26. The vessel became a total wreck, but everybody aboard her was saved. The steamer Wollumbin went ashore off Bungarie-Norah on the same night, and so did the steamer Aldinga Bellambi off South Built. In both cases all hands were saved. No fewer than eleven steamers went ashore on the Queensland coast during this storm, and the number of sailing vessels and other craft wrecked had not been computed. The steamers were unable to make any headway in the teeth of the hurricane. They were simply blown ashore. The list of wrecks and casualties was not even approximately complete when the steamer that brought this news left Australia. Telegraph wires were down everywhere. It was known that the storms and floods prevailed over wide areas of Queensland, and that great loss of life and property had resulted.

In Townsville, a port in Queensland, scarcely a house was left standing. A cable despatch printed in THE SUN last week told that seventeen vessels went down in the harbor of Townsville during the gale, among them being four passenger steamers, the loss in these seventeen cases aggregating $2,500,000.

Perhaps the greatest measure of disaster and suffering was meted out in Coolgardie gold fields. The wilderness of Western Australia, in which these gold fields are situated, is as wild and inhospitable a region as the world can show. It is composed of vast wastes of alkaline sand of almost unbroken flatness. The sand is blown about by the hot winds and here and there shifting hillocks are formed, while in a few places there are gulches, never more than a few yards in width and a few feet in depth. For all the difference these slight elevations and depressions, these hillocks and gulches, make in the monotony of the alkali wastes, the wilderness might as well be as even as a floor.

There is gold in abundance in these wastes, but there is a total lack of water. Rain never has been known to fall in this desert region, and dew is equally unknown. Every drop of water and every morsel of food has to be carried by caravan across many miles of desert to the gold camps. It is scarcely two years since the gold in this wilderness first attracted prospectors. Half a dozen camps sprang up, and from all the colonies streams of men flowed into the desert. Fortunes in gold were taken from the sands almost in a day, and for a time the gold fields flourished.

But the utter lack of water in the desert, and the enormous expense of carrying it, soon threatened to close up the camps. The Government and the gold companies made innumerable borings for water, but always without success. All kinds of rain-making experiments were tried, but they were futile. At the beginning of this year the Premier of Western Australia and his Cabinet decided to ask Parliament for an appropriation of $2,000,000 as an initial expenditure for an attempt to find water somewhere near the fields and pipe it to the camps. It was decided to go ahead and spend $275,000 without waiting for the sanction of Parliament, and work was begun in January.

During the hot wave in this burning desert the thermometer marked 130° in the shade for many days in succession. After the first few days there was no shade, for every place became struck through and through with the heat. Many persons in the camps were poor prospectors, and when the water supplies got low they were the first to suffer. The heat made it impossible for caravans to cross the plains to carry water and provisions to the camps. Indeed, the people in the usually moist and fertile districts from which the caravans started with supplies were themselves prostrated or demoralized. Water and provisions became scarce at the camps, where the advance supplies seldom were more than enough for a few days.

Many men died from the heat, and many more from the heat and lack of water combined. Madness, induced by sunstroke or thirst, or both, appeared in the camps. The men became frantic, and, despite the apparent hopelessness of the task, started out to cross the burning desert in an effort to reach the green land that lay beyond the arid waste. All the stampeding hundreds were afoot, and very few had water and provisions. Beyond doubt all were more than half crazed. The point they started for was the railway town of Perth named after the capital a little town on the border of the great arid plain. Scarcely half the number that started reached Perth. The newspapers say that hundreds dropped out on the way and died, and that the caravan track from Perth to Coolgardie is strewn with the dried bodies or bleaching bones of miners.

When the mail that brought this news left Australia the town of Perth was more than half filled with survivors of the exodus. Many of those who reached Perth were insane, perhaps hopelessly so, and the majority were prostrated. All were destitute. The whole country was still suffering from the effects of the heat, and public or private relief was hard to get. Relief funds were advertised in all the Australian colonies, and it was believed the worst of the horrors of the Coolgardie gold fields were over. Even then, however, the worst was not known, as the telegraph lines had not been restored sufficiently to handle all the business offered, and telegrams from Western Australia were three or four days late.

It is believed in Australia that some means of supplying water to the Coolgardie fields will yet be found, and that if this is done the alkali desert will prove to be the most productive gold field in the world.

The Marine Band's Horn of Plenty.

From the Washington Evening Star.

"The Marine Band, now the pride of the nation's capital," said an old musician, "had but few brass instruments except bugles when it was organized. Indeed, there were but few brass instruments in use in those days, for cornets, alto horns, and tubas are comparatively new. I remember to have seen the Marine Band marching through the streets of this city, led by six violinists, with two or three violas, a fiddle in size between the ordinary violin and the violoncello. Nearly all the other instruments were reed, flageolets and clarinets, with an occasional French horn. The big attraction of the band for street parades was a chime of bells, which were carried on a big stick above the player's head. He shook them as the band marched along, and made a great deal of noise if not music. Cymbals, drums, bass and snares were more in evidence as features than now.

"The Marine Band had the honor and credit of inventing what was called the boom-pah horn. It was a horn of immense size. It was not intended so much for musical purposes as it was to carry off plunder. Whenever the band officiated at receptions, banquets, and the like, the bandsmen packed it full of good things for the children at home."